

CONTRIBUTION TO NMFS ANNUAL REPORT

In response to a growing interest in the resources of the relatively untouched Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI), the Honolulu Laboratory recently began planning to gather ecological information to formulate management decisions on the long-range use of aquatic resources and the protection of the aquatic and terrestrial resources of these islands. With the exception of Midway Islands, which are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of Defense, the islands comprising the NWHI, including Nihoa, Necker Island, French Frigate Shoals with La Perouse Pinnacle, Gardner Pinnacles, Maro Reef, Laysan Island, Lisianski Island, Pearl and Hermes Reef, and Kure Island, are under the administration and jurisdiction of the State of Hawaii. Kure is a designated State Wildlife Refuge and is managed by the State of Hawaii. However, the balance of the NWHI was designated a national wildlife refuge in 1909, and as such are currently under the administration and jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because of the overlapping interests and jurisdictions, a Tripartite Cooperative Agreement among the National Marine Fisheries Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the State of Hawaii is being negotiated to provide a detailed survey and assessment of the biological resources of the NWHI. The Honolulu Laboratory will assume the lead role in the implementation of the agreement and has designated a coordinator for the study. The Honolulu Laboratory will also have the responsibility to survey and assess the insular, seamount, and pelagic and other fish resources of the area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be responsible for the survey and assessment of the

terrestrial resources, and the Hawaii State Division of Fish and Game will have the responsibility for the fishery resources of the "nearshore zone," which includes the splash zone and the underwater area from the shoreline to about 20 m from shore.